

REMARKS

By Office Action mailed June 2, 2004, pending claims 172-177, 179-188, 201, 202, 204, 205 and 209-212 stand rejected and pending claims 189-200, 203 and 206-208 are objected to, reconsideration of which is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and following remarks. Claims 189, 195, 203, 206 and 207 have been amended. Claims 172-177, 179-188, 201, 202, 204, 205 and 209-212 have been cancelled. Claims 189-200, 203 and 206-208 are now pending

Allowable Subject Matter

As recommended by the Examiner, Applicants have amended claims 189, 195, 203, 206 and 207 to recite as independent claims incorporating all the limitations of previously pending claim 172, and any intervening claims as necessary. Accordingly, pending claims 189, 195, 203, 206 and 207, and corresponding dependent claims 190-194, 196-200 and 208 are now in condition for allowance.

Cancelled Claims

In addition, in order to expedite allowance of claims 189-200, 203 and 206-208, Applicants have cancelled claims 172-177, 179-188, 201, 202, 204, 205 and 209-212 without prejudice to the filing of any divisional, continuation, or continuation-in-part application.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 172-177, 179-188, 201, 202, 204, 205 and 209-212 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over Ramsey (U.S. Patent No. 5,858,195). Although Applicants respectively disagree with the Examiner's conclusions, in order to expedite allowance of the remaining claims and as set forth above, Applicants have cancelled claims 172-177, 179-188, 201, 202, 204, 205 and 209-212 without prejudice to the prosecution of the canceled subject matter in one or more related applications. Accordingly, this ground of rejection has been obviated.

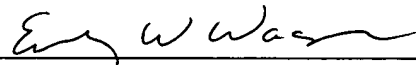
Application No. 09/688,055
Reply to Office Action mailed June 2, 2004

In view of the above amendment and remarks, allowance of claims 189-200, 203 and 206-208 is respectfully requested. A good faith effort has been made to place this application in condition for allowance. However, should any further issue require attention prior to allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at (206) 622-4900 to resolve the same. Furthermore, the Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fees due by way of this Amendment, or credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 19-1090.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark R. Holl, et al.

SEED Intellectual Property Law Group PLLC



Emily W. Wagner
Registration No. 50,922

EWV:cw

Enclosure:
Postcard

701 Fifth Avenue, Suite 6300
Seattle, Washington 98104-7092
Phone: (206) 622-4900
Fax: (206) 682-6031

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